

Message Text

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PAGE 01 OTTAWA 03872 032325Z
ACTION EUR-12

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: ELAB, CA
SUBJECT: POST OFFICE LABOR PROBLEMS

REF: OTTAWA 3073

1. IN HIS SPEECH TO THE NATION ON AUGUST 1, 1978, PRIME MINISTER TRUDEAU LABELED THE SITUATION IN THE POST OFFICE "INTOLERABLE" AND SAID: "THEREFORE, I HAVE DECIDED IN CONSULTATION WITH THE POSTMASTER GENERAL THAT THE POST OFFICE WILL BECOME A CROWN CORPORATION, FREE FROM MANY OF THE CONSTRAINTS OF A GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENT." THIS DECISION OF THE PRIME MINISTER COMES IN THE WAKE OF WILDCAT STRIKES IN TORONTO AND WINDSOR, ONTARIO BY MAIL TRUCK DRIVERS OF THE LETTER CARRIERS UNION. THE LETTER CARRIERS ARE PRESENTLY NEGOTIATING RENEWAL OF THEIR NATIONAL COLLECTIVE BARGAINING AGREEMENT WHICH EXPIRED JUNE 30, 1978 -- NOT TO BE CONFUSED WITH THE YEAR-OLD NEGOTIATIONS OF THE INSIDE POSTAL WORKERS (CUPW) REPORTED REFTEL. THE PRESIDENT OF THE LATTER, JEAN CLAUDE PARROT, ISSUED STATEMENTS TO THE PRESS INDICATING HIS UNION'S DESIRE THAT THE POST OFFICE-TREASURY BOARD NEGOTIATORS QUICKLY ADVANCE NEGOTIATIONS OR

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CUPW WILL OFFICIALLY ASK THE CONCILIATION BOARD TO SUBMIT ITS REPORT. NORMALLY, CONCILIATION BOARDS SIT FOR FOURTEEN DAYS. THIS BOARD HANDLING THE CUPW-POST OFFICE CONTRACT HAS BEEN SITTING FOR SIXTEEN WEEKS. SEVEN DAYS AFTER THE BOARD SUBMITS ITS RECOMMENDATIONS CUPW WILL BE IN A LEGAL POSITION TO STRIKE.

2. DURING AN OTTAWA TELEVISION INTERVIEW ON AUGUST 3, PARROT SAID THAT CUPW WAS PLEASED WITH THE PRIME MINISTER'S DECISION TO TRANSFORM THE POST OFFICE DEPARTMENT INTO A CROWN CORPORATION, WHICH IN HIS MIND WILL ELIMINATE BUREAUCRATIC DELAYS IN HANDLING OPERATIONAL GRIEVANCES OVER SUCH THINGS AS TECHNOLOGICAL CHANGE AND USE OF CASUAL LABOR. OF PARTICULAR SIGNIFICANCE WERE HIS REMARKS THAT THE CHANGE OVER TO A CROWN CORPORATION WOULD TAKE ANYWHERE FROM SIX MONTHS TO A YEAR AND, THEREFORE, WOULD NOT AFFECT THE CURRENT CONTRACT NEGOTIATIONS. PARROT SAID CUPW MUST OBTAIN WORKING CONDITIONS CLAUSES IN THEIR NEW AGREEMENT SO THAT THEY CAN BE PASSED ON TO THE NEW CROWN CORPORATION.

3. COMMENT: PARROT IS MANEUVERING CUPW INTO A STRIKE POSITION. OBVIOUSLY, HE WANTS TO WIN CONDITIONS NOW, RATHER THAN WAIT FOR THE FORMATION OF THE CROWN CORPORATION. A NEW DEMOCRATIC PARTY MEMBER OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS TOLD THE LABOR ATTACHE CUPW WOULD HAVE THE SAME PROBLEMS IN A CROWN CORPORATION AS THEY NOW HAVE -- AND MORE, HIS IMPLICATION BEING THAT THE MANAGEMENT OF A CROWN CORPORATION WILL DEAL MORE STRONGLY WITH ERRING POSTAL EMPLOYEES. ENDERS

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